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LOBSTERMEN CAUGHT RED-HANDED; ILLEGAL CATCH IS RELEASED

Licenses suspended for thirty days; fines assessed and paid

The Massachusetts Environmental Police announced today that two commercial lobstermen, who were apprehended late last year, have both been fined and surrendered their licenses for three months. Daniel Desmond of Nahant, and Michael Desmond of Lynn were both charged with attempting to sell to a wholesale seafood distributor 186 undersized lobsters, of which 23 were v-notched female lobsters.

Undersized lobsters – below 3 ¼" carapace length – are protected, as are those female lobsters that display a v-notch in the tail flipper. By law, commercial lobstermen, fishing in certain areas, are required to carve a small v-notch into all egg bearing female lobsters caught in the process of lobstering. The small v-notch in a female lobster's tail flipper signifies that it must be released by anyone who catches it in the future. This regulatory practice has been established in order to maintain a sufficient number of egg-laying females among the lobster population.

"Anyone who obtains a license to trap lobsters understands the protective measures that are necessary," said James Hanlon, the Acting Director of Environmental Law Enforcement.

Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder added, "This type of short-term thinking, can threaten the long-term sustainability of the lobster population."

Daniel Desmond who owned the fishing vessel Star Fire pled guilty in Boston Municipal Court and in addition to the loss of license, paid a fine of \$17,600. His son, Michael Desmond, whose vehicle transported the lobsters from Winthrop Harbor where the vessel landed to the distributor in Chelsea, pled guilty in Chelsea District Court and paid a fine of \$1,000.

The two were allowed to keep approximately 92 pounds of lobsters that were gauged properly. The other lobsters (the shorts and v-notch) were returned, alive and kicking, by the

Environmental Police back into Boston Harbor. Environmental Police Officers involved in the case were Sgt. Tim Carroll and Officer Chris Baker.
